MARVEL

012

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[_of_X]

GILLEN
WERNECK
CURIEL

RATED **T+**
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CHAPTER 12: THE IDIOT

The night before, Piotr met with Shaw. He brought vodka. Shaw drank, and this would be easier if Piotr was drunk too. It would not be his choice to socialize with such a man.

Nothing was Piotr Rasputin's choice anymore. His life was being written by a scrivener in a Russian cell. He had betrayed all his friends already. He would betray them all again. Between shots, Shaw and Piotr made a deal, and both would get what they wanted.

"I have to say, Peter -- I'm surprised. And impressed," said Shaw.

Of course he is, thought Piotr. Shaw barely knew him, and even he knows this is unlike him. That is Piotr's hope, even as he draws a dagger forth -- that someone will see how unlike himself he is acting.

The plan was finalized. Shaw had learned that Storm would be absent tomorrow. Come the meeting, Shaw would ask for a closed session, removing the possibly compromised Hope, Xavier, Emma and Exodus from the room...

...and then he would commence.

Okay, Shaw. What's on your mind?

It'd better not be some kind of political game...

I think we've left Sinister's seat empty for too long.

It should be filled--with immediate effect.

Oh, this *is* a political game. C'mon, Shaw. At least try.

Get everyone back in--

Motion to immediately proceed to the selection of a new member of the Quiet Council?

I vote aye.

Agreed.

With a simple raised hand, Piotr draws forth his blade.

Storm is Nightcrawler's proxy. Old shiny here is Storm's. As she's out, that means he has ***three*** votes.

By my math, four votes pro and only three who could vote against.

Pete?

So...the candidate. Don't worry, she's someone who has ***lots*** of experience.

I've worked with her before, and I think she'd do a bang-up job in our little fraternity...

Do I need to repeat my pitch?

Honestly, I'd rather skip to having a throne.

He smiles inside. "There you go, my old love," he thinks. "You know me. See this is wrong.

"See this is wrong before I destroy you all."

Pete! For @&$#% sake! What are you *doing?*

[00_mutants_of_X]
[00_the_world__X]

IMMORTAL

STEEL YOURSELF.

The Quiet Council is reeling with the knowledge of an alternate timeline in which the machinations that Sinister has been implementing across Krakoa since its conception, including corrupting the resurrection process with his own DNA, were allowed to play out. And while steps have been taken to prevent this timeline coming to pass, some of those wheels are already in motion -- including the compromising of several of the council's recently resurrected members, Xavier, Hope, Exodus and Emma Frost. Forge has spearheaded efforts to remove the hidden Sinister DNA in these council members and in the resurrection process as a whole, but only time will tell if his efforts were successful. Until they know for sure, the tainted four have had their voting rights on the council stripped.

Unfortunately, the council's better angels grow weaker still -- Nightcrawler has taken leave of Krakoa, granting power of his vote to Storm. She has granted control of her vote when she is absent to Colossus. Colossus, meanwhile, is himself controlled by a powerful mutant writer enslaved by his brother, Mikhail Rasputin.

[AUTUMN]

[PROFESSOR X]

[HOPE SUMMERS]

[DESTINY]

[SPRING]

[EMMA FROST]

[SEBASTIAN SHAW]

[KATE PRYDE]

[SUMMER]

[NIGHTCRAWLER]

[STORM]

[COLOSSUS]

[WINTER]

[EXODUS]

[?]

[MYSTIQUE]

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[00_mutants_of_X]
[00_the_world__X]

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[00_00...12]

You were dead...

...and now I'm alive!

Your feisty redhead isn't the only resurrection game in town. Magic is a *wonderful* thing.

You should all know it takes something a little less tawdry than a bullet to get rid of the goddess Selene.

Piotr didn't know how Selene had returned or why Shaw wanted her on the council. He didn't even know why Shaw came to Piotr with the proposition.

...but they thought the reward worth the risk.

Were I to die eternally, it would not be beside a mucky little river like the Thames. I would die like Cleopatra, but with a Lady Bāthory twist.

Did I ever say I gave Bāthory that whole bathing-in-blood idea? It doesn't do anything, but the touch of blood is just *divine*.

Now-- this one is mine, yes? Has it been hosed down?

Yes and yes, my queen.

Those whose pen guided him were as confused as he...

No.

What do you mean, "no"?

We have the votes. You at least surely saw this coming?

I did.

Shaw is working for Orchis.

Piotr frowns. This would explain much. Piotr is a pawn of his brother in Russia.

Whose piece is Shaw?

I assure you, woman. I am not.

I would happily submit to a psychic search to confirm that fact.

However, we have a distinct lack of psychics. The possibly wicked four are out.

Rachel and Jean aren't exactly unbiased against me, for entirely understandable reasons.

Perhaps Selene could do it? I'm sure she'll vouch for my good character.

Please. I would never do such a thing.

The room is sealed. We have our security.

Yes, I heard you, ma'am.

You didn't need to think so loud.

I warn you, Rasputin--I am trained to keep my thoughts a guarded house. I have opened doors for you to peer through.

I will know if you're nosing where you shouldn't--

I could plunder your mind like your future self plundered the afterlives of a thousand worlds...

...and you would *never* know, Sebastian Shaw.

But I would not.

He has no relationship with Orchis.

Perhaps the Black King remains a King and not a piece?

In some ways, it would be comforting if all the villains were merely villains.

And this is just one villain turning on another...

But...I saw it.

I *see* it.

I could scan *your* mind to ascertain your vision.

I... NO. Absolutely not.

Hmph. Well, if there's a future where I *do* end up with Orchis, perhaps the lack of trust by my peers is the reason why?

Piotr thought it the classic twist in a story of prophecy. He thought it the classic twist in *all* tales of tragedy.

For your fears to lead to everything you fear.

It is not a comforting thought.

Enough of the posture, Shaw.

This is serious, and there is further business. Let us progress.

You can't do this, Pete.

How far does this coup go?

If I go, do you vote in *my* absence?

We do. And we go only a little further.

Kurt has left Ororo his proxy vote.

I move that Kurt's proxy is moved to me until he returns or his replacement is chosen.

Aye?

You sold us out for an ***extra vote!***

It is a cue. The moment of truth. The Chronicler prepares his pen...

...and writes Piotr's tongue.

I have sold no one out. I am only thinking of Krakoa.

This council is ***corrupt.***

I became liaison to X-Force to prevent further abuses of their power. Do you think my anger is limited to them?

Iceland could be ***dead*** thanks to you, Destiny.

Kate--you are now closer to ***Emma*** than to ***me.***

The good are gone, and only sinners remain. We are heavy with secrets. We should be better than that.

I move that we release the full details of the Sinister timeline to the world.

Piotr shudders at his writer's smugness.

To propose a plan to hurt Krakoa that can be justified as "doing the right thing"...

...and Piotr hopes that someone will do the wrong thing.

The Green Room.

Are you ***seriously*** telling me we have three of the most powerful telepaths on Earth and ***none*** of you are going to just peek?

I kept my vigil in a cave for nearly a millennia.

I have patience. It is a virtue.

You were ***snoozing!***

To pry would be a breach of trust. It is such actions as that that led to the Sinister timeline.

To act like that now would only show we are likely compromised. We can't, no matter how much we wish to.

Oh, listen to yourself, Xavier. Really?

We ***may*** be compromised, but Shaw doesn't ***need*** to be compromised. He's an arse.

Every second we stay out of that room, the more likely we'll find some human tourists on our beach in a luxury hotel.

...

@#$% it. ***I'm*** doing it.

Hope!

Crap.

When concocting the plan, Piotr was unsure. He didn't think it could work.

They wouldn't have enough time to make the move. Something would interrupt.

Get out of the way, shiny!

The meeting is closed.

Calm yourself...

Shaw smirked, while playing with his shot glass, and said simply...

"Oh, I've got a few plans in place to prevent that."

Suoethgir rehtom uoy knaht.

...or I will calm you, monster!

Emma, I can feel your mind move. Don't!

I'm reading Hope, not the council members, to see what ***she*** learned. I'm sticking to the rules.

They've...

...Selene is back. And...they've voted her onto the council. They're going to--

I'm going to put Colossus to sleep.

NO!

Even now. We *can't.*

Hey, Exodus. Want to make it up to me?

Get down here! I need help kicking this girl's teeth in.

What the hell are you doing?

I cannot stop this. Who can?

Ah.

Gunfire and shouting.

There's fighting outside.

Piotr recognizes it--impossible impacts against steel skin. It is a sound most familiar to him.

There is...

"...however, we must continue."

This is something we can't spring on the council.

We have to debate this one properly. It's *complicated!*

"Do the right thing," Kate. "Be honest."

It's not "complicated."

The clock ticks. Piotr fights to not call the vote.

Arakko.

He realizes the thing that the writer most loves?

The thing that he can use to string this out for a few more seconds?

Drama.

Kitty would have understood.

Do you?

Piotr hopes that Kate will forgive him for the ugly words when the truth is revealed.

And he hopes that hands will, one day, find their way around the writer's neck...

...but the delay has done its work.

STOP!

Exodus has brought Storm here. Playing by the rules while saving the day.

Piotr's mind collapses, falling backward. He is a creature of strength, and he thinks it the heaviest weight he ever lifted.

He is exhausted...

...and the writer is free to write whatever he wishes.

What are you *doing?*

You made me your proxy to do the right thing in your absence.

I have been. I understand you may not see that immediately...

"...but tensions are clearly high..."

...I move we break while we consider this, calm down and return to debate it.

My position is just. I am happy to convince you of that.

Piotr thinks he's won. What the writer wanted? It will not come to pass.

However, even in his relief, Piotr thinks back to Shaw's words and fears...

...Shaw said he had a *few* plans in place.

You didn't come to my aid? Really? And even bringing in Rasputin?

You said you had a vision. I wanted to prove it. You should have told me if you were going to lie.

Or was it a lie? Were you just wrong?

I don't know. When the Moira engine was destroyed, all the futures were reborn. It's much bigger again...and a whole new map.

I only know the *old* map. I haven't fallen into a vision-coma again, so I lack the larger perspective of the days yet to come.

I am in a new land with only what I can see with a telescope and a few vague tales of distant lands...

Plus, there is something... strange out there. I do not understand it. An end of vision. A gap.

I am good short term. I have visions of the medium and long term--I am trying to sort them and find a new nexus I can manipulate.

So I am more blind than I have ever been before.

What is wrong with me is that I am ***weak,*** and that makes me ***scared.***

What's wrong with ***you?*** You've been distant for weeks. What is--?

Oh god.

I see it.

What's wrong?

You're going to kill me.

I would never do that. Ever.

However, listen. It's a message to Sinister.

I am trying to find a way to save Mystique. I see the future and there is only death for her. It's horrible.

To see the woman you love torn asunder so many times. I... I know you can't understand.

Your nightmare dimension was the longest path of her life, so I followed it. She beat the odds so many times, and I tried to be hopeful.

That's me? I didn't say this. I...

Is this from the Sinister timeline? Where did you find this?

Just listen.

No world is truly a hell with her in it. Now, if she is gone again, we must try again... and perhaps I can discern another route alongside--

Enough.

You would have burned this island for me.

I would keep a hell world living so you would breathe, and when you breathed your last, I would light the match that burned a ***universe*** for you.

That is the nature of our love. What has changed?

You patronize me now, as you patronized me then. You acted ***only*** to save me, as if that's all that matters.

I am ***Mystique.*** I am a ***tiger.***

You do not keep me in a ***cage.***

I try to find ways to save you, but it means I see all the ways I *don't* save you. I...

You don't know what it's like. Seeing you die, time and time over.

My gift is a gift.

Our love is immortal.

We are not.

And if you cannot accept that to love Mystique is to know that one day you will *lose* Mystique, our love is not what I thought it was.

But it is still our love.

Do not fail me.

See...you and your visions. Are they visions or just your fears?

I would never kill you.

Suoethgir rehtom uoy knaht.

Arbor Magna.
Later.

What happened?

I don't know what came over me. I was suddenly angry.

I killed you. I--

While this little lovers' tiff is all very touching, we have a problem.

Hope brought Destiny back. Hope is possibly compromised by Sinister-gene muck, so everyone she brings back is *also* possibly compromised.

Now I do believe a precedent has been set for that. You get to sit and chat, but no votes for Irene.

Yes, you're cynical...but I know nothing about this. You can have Rasputin scan me again, if you like.

Maybe I'm working for Orchis *now.*

No, my love. Don't.

And really...

"...it won't make any difference."

Four votes for, three votes against, five unable to vote...

It is decided. The world will know of the sins of Krakoa.

This is hard but necessary. It will make us stronger.

Peter...

...why?

Piotr wishes he could speak.

"My old friend -- I am being controlled by a reality warper. It is not Sinister who left the hidden serpent here."

Instead?

He spouts justifications.

You trusted *me*, Storm. *I* don't trust *you*.

It was arrogant to assume that I would agree with you in all things.

Ah! There. A chance. The writer may let it through.

Piotr summons the last of his strength and tries with all his might...

...and succeeds.

I am not *your* playing piece.

Above all, the man who shapes Piotr's actions is a writer. He appreciates irony. A stylistic touch.

And above all else, he doesn't think Ororo will notice...

Piotr does. Trapped in the cell of his mind, he prays for deliverance.

He wishes Ororo to see past the justifications and know the simple, awful truth.

"I am trapped in a Russian novel, and all the demons of Dostoyevsky possess me. I am tormented as Raskolnikov, and my escape is just as impossible.

"Be ***suspicious.*** I am not a holy fool like Prince Myshkin. Do not think me a simple, naive, idealistic idiot.

"You are my only hope."

We'll live with what you've done today, Peter.

I hope you're right.

Piotr should have known better.

He is trapped in a Russian novel.

It is not a place for hope.

летописец

[Immortal_[0.12]

NEXT

"Deadlocked"

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